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Paul, Congress pass important Ag legislation *Measure makes foreign markets more accessible to US produce*

WASHINGTON, DC - A measure to give American farmers and ranchers greater access to world markets easily passed the Congress late Monday night, with the strong support of US Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas).

The measure is HR4647, which requires congressional approval before embargoes on agricultural exports can take effect. Under current law, the president is able to impose agricultural export embargoes without oversight or input from farmers and ranchers. Under HR4647, farmers - through their Representatives and Senators - would have a voice in whether or not those embargoes go into place.

"American farmers need to have more access to foreign markets, not less," said Rep. Paul. "This is a small, first step in ensuring that American agricultural producers can compete in new markets."

Rep. Paul said Congress needs to have oversight because often embargoes have been used as economic weapons which hurt not the leaders of countries being targeted, but rather the people in those countries as well as American farmers and ranchers. With congressional oversight, it becomes less likely that embargoes will be placed on US agricultural products because now the voices of farmers and ranchers will be heard on the issue.

"Free and open trade is our national heritage," said Rep. Paul. "In my travels around the 14th District, I've never once had a farmer come up and ask me to limit his access to a particular market. Instead, they want to be able to compete in the global market."

Rep. Paul said he is going to continue fighting to see currently closed markets opened to

American agricultural products. When presidents have closed markets to American farmers, it has often then served as an excuse for Congress to pay subsidies to farmers as a form of pay-back for limiting their right to sell.

"Farmers in the 14th District tell me that they would much rather be allowed to compete in the marketplace than have the federal government offering string-attached cash and loans," said Rep. Paul.